



# Florence County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report*

**Board Chair:**  
Mrs. Ivey Staley

**Executive Director:**  
Mr. Spencer R. Scott

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**Total children in county under  
age 6: 11,096**

**Children under age 6 living in  
poverty: 11.6%**

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## **Florence County Highlights**

- Parent-Child Home children show 36.7% gain on ACIRI literacy assessment.
- E-LAP scores for Zion Canaan Child Development Center show a 12.08% gain in expressive language.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

FY 08 was a year of significant change and growth for the Florence County First Steps Partnership. The fiscal year began with the employment of a Program Coordinator, Center of Excellence Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. The new staff merged and successfully implemented strategies to ensure that children are ready for school.

Florence County First Steps made considerable strides in the area of **Family Strengthening**. We continued to partner with the five Florence county school districts to implement the Parent Child Home Program. New assessment instruments (KIPS and ACIRI) introduced by SCFS, facilitated a more objective measure of program progress. KIPS data showed an overall improvement rate for Florence County of 10.3%. The ACIRI showed similar improvement results (adults – 22.9%, children – 36.7%).

In the area of **Quality Child Care**, the Center of Excellence initiative was implemented at Zion Canaan Child Development Center (Timmonsville) and Excellent Learning Preschool, Incorporated (Florence). The Early LAP and LAP-3 were used to measure student progress. These assessments showed significant progress at both centers. This initiative included a partnership with Francis Marion University's School of Nursing and Small Smiles Dental Clinic to provide health and dental screenings.

Also in the area of **Quality Child Care**, Childcare Provider workshops were scheduled on a regular basis. One hundred thirty-seven providers from 42 facilities participated in training sessions. These providers impacted the lives of 1,713 children and earned a total of 878 DSS credit hours.

Florence County First Steps partnered with Florence County School District 3 to implement the Countdown to Kindergarten program. This program helped children to transition into kindergarten successfully. Thirty families participated in this program.

In the area of **Early Education**, Florence County continued to implement the 4K Pilot Program, known as CDEPP. Eighty-three (83) at-risk students participated in the program at seven facilities. 420 hours of technical assistance were provided resulting in improved environmental rating scale scores for those classrooms.

Sincerely,

*Spencer R. Scott*

Spencer R. Scott  
Executive Director  
Florence County First Steps

## **First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas**

*The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:*

**Family Strengthening:** A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

**Healthy Start:** Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

**Quality Child Care:** Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

**Early Education:** Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

**School Transition:** The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

## **2007-08 County Partnership Programs by Strategy**

### **FAMILY STRENGTHENING.**

#### **Parent Child Home Program**

**Program Description:** Florence County First Steps collaborated with the five school districts within the county to implement the Parent Child Home Program. The Parent Child Home Program is an innovative two-year home based program which focuses on stimulating parent-child verbal interaction and developing critical language and literacy skills. The goal of the PCHP is to increase verbal interaction between parent and child. This verbal interaction has both cognitive and affective components.

This PCHP is open to families who have children ages 2-4 who are at-risk for school failure. The families whom we seek to serve are often challenged by poverty, low levels of education, language barriers, or other obstacles to educational success.

During two 30-minute weekly home visits, home visitors model verbal interaction, parenting techniques, and educational play using educational books and toys. These books and toys are given to the family to work with their child. The family receives a minimum of 46 visits per year. The Home Visitor may make additional visits to administer test and surveys. The expected outcomes are an increase in parent – child interactions, increase in language skills, and improvement in parenting skills.

**Program results:**

- Florence County First Steps served eighty-nine (89) families during FY08. This consisted of ninety-three (93) adults and ninety-six (96) children.
- Two assessment tools were used to measure client growth. These tools were the KIPS (Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale) and ACIRI (Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory).

KIPS is a tool for assessing key parenting behaviors and evaluating program outcomes. It assesses 12 key parenting behaviors that are meaningful for intervention. These behaviors are: 1) sensitivity of responses, 2) response to emotions, 3) encouragement, 4) promotion of exploration/curiosity, 5) involvement in the child's activities, 6) language experiences, 7) touch/physical interaction, 8) limits and consequences, 9) openness to the child's agenda, 10) reasonable expectations, 11) adaptation of strategies to child, and 12) supportive directions.

The KIPS assessment utilizes a recorded observation of a parent playing with his or her child for 20 minutes. It is used to evaluate parents of children ages 2 months old up to 5 years of age. The evaluation is based on a 5-point rating scale.

The ACIRI is an interactive reading inventory for parents and children ages 2.5 years old to 5 years old. The ACIRI is a literacy-specific evaluation based on the observation of a parent and child reading together. Three major categories divide the adult-child literacy behaviors. These categories are Enhancing Attention to Text, Promoting Interactive Reading and Supporting Comprehension, and Using Literacy Strategies. The ACIRI evaluates the interactions between parents and children relating to literacy acquisition, utilizing a 3-point scoring scale.

**Statistics**

- The PCHP was used to serve 93 adults in Florence County during FY08. This was 93% of the projected adults.
- 96 children were served. This was 96% of the projected children.
- 44.94% of the total clients possessed one or more of the First Steps Board of Trustees' priority risk factors.
- 4,435 total home visits were conducted. The average number of home visits per family was 6.2 per month.

## **Data Analysis**

- ***KIPS Improvement Rate***
  - Florence District 1 – 5.3%
  - Florence District 2 – 16.3%
  - Florence District 3 – 3.8%
  - Florence District 4 – 49.1%
  - Florence District 5 – (-5.9%)
  - Overall for Florence County – 10.3%
- ***ACIRI Improvement Rate for Adults***
  - Florence District 1 – 16.6%
  - Florence District 2 – 32.9%
  - Florence District 3 – 18.6%
  - Florence District 4 – 62.7%
  - Florence District 5 – 5.9%
  - Overall for Florence County – 22.9%
- ***ACIRI Improvement Rate for Children***
  - Florence District 1 – 27.6%
  - Florence District 2 – 43.3%
  - Florence District 3 – 27.7%
  - Florence District 4 – 72.3%
  - Florence District 5 – 25.1%
  - Overall for Florence County – 36.7%
- ***Additional Data:*** Florence County School District Four administers the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to children above age 2.5. The PPVT is an assessment of children's receptive language. Children are assessed at the beginning of the first year in the PCHP and at the end of the second year. Pre- and post-assessment data was available for twelve (12) students exiting the program at the end of FY08. The average pre-assessment percentile rank was 5. The average post-assessment percentile rank was 12. This shows an average gain in percentile ranks of 7 points.

## **HEALTHY START.**

### **Home Health Visitation Program**

**Program description:** The Home Health Visitation Program is designed to ensure that children receive a healthy start in life by offering early intervention and preventative services.

#### **Program results:**

- The Home Health Visitation Program provided services to 100 families. These families included 101 adults and 155 children.
- Eighty-six (86) cases had identified risk factors.
- The program conducted 402 successful home visits.
- 14 clients were referred to school district Parent Child Home Programs.

- Six clients were referred to First Steps for Daycare Assistance.
- One client was referred to BabyNet because of symptoms of developmental delay.
- Two clients were referred to the Job Service WIA Program for job training assistance.
- Five clients were referred to Head Start Programs for school readiness.

## **QUALITY CHILD CARE.**

### **Child Care Quality Enhancement**

**Program Description:** The goal of Child Care Quality Enhancement is to provide technical assistance to identified child care providers. The environmental rating scale instruments (ECERS, ITERS, and FCCERS) will be used to pre- and post assess centers and will serve as the basis for the development of an improvement plan. The Technical Assistance Provider and Center staff will work collaboratively to develop the improvement plan. Technical assistance site visits will be made, at a minimum, on a bi-weekly basis. Based on environmental rating scales pre-assessments, Florence County First Steps funds will be used to purchase needed equipment and supplies in classrooms and/or playgrounds.

#### **Program results:**

- Several factors impacted on the Partnership's ability to serve 90% of the projected facilities. The Partnership experienced significant personnel changes in Spring and Summer of 2007. New personnel were not employed until late August, 2007. The technical assistance waiver was submitted to the State Office of First Steps on August 30, 2007. The technical assistance waiver was not approved until January, 2008. Technical assistance training was not provided until late April. Due to limited personnel, lack of training, and state requirements for technical assistance, the Partnership reduced the number of facilities to be served from 13 to 4. These facilities included one center, two group homes and 1 family home provider.

#### **Measures of Success:**

- Total TA visits equaled 262.
- Average TA visits per month were 5.46.
- Total TA hours equaled 226.75.
- Average TA duration per visit was 51.93 minutes.

### **Child Care Provider Training**

**Program Description:** The Child Care Staff Training and Development strategy for Florence County First Steps provides DSS training opportunities for all child care facilities within the county. The trainings areas include: Curriculum, Growth and Development, Health and Safety, and all others needed for DSS certification. Other topics are included based on suggestions made by providers.

All trainings are conducted by trainers certified or registered through the South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development. Trainings take place at a time and location that is convenient to participants across the county.

Program results:

- Personnel (137 providers) from 42 child care facilities participated in 16.5 hours of training.
- Trainings impacted the lives of 1,713 children.
- A total of 878 DSS credit hours were awarded to providers.

### **Child Care Scholarships**

**Program Description:** Florence County First Steps partners with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to implement the Scholarship Initiative. Florence County First Steps will provide scholarships for children in families needing assistance for child care. Applications are completed by parent(s) and a preliminary screening occurs in the Partnership office. Applications are then sent to DSS for approval. Parents are strongly recommended to place their approved children in child care facilities that participate in First Steps Quality Enhancement to ensure that the children are receiving quality care.

#### **Program Results:**

- Thirty-three families were awarded Child Care Scholarships.

### **Centers of Excellence**

**Program Description:** The Centers of Excellence model is a comprehensive, multi-component strategy designed to connect low-income children (ages zero to 3) and their families with access to superior early education programming and parenting supports.

#### **Program Results:**

- Twenty-two families (26 children) were served through the COE program.
- Families who were awarded the COE Scholarship were given the opportunity to go into the workforce full-time, enroll in college, earn a GED or a high school diploma, and succeed above the TANF assistance program. The awarded children were able to enter into a stable school preschool setting with a curriculum that will prepare them for school. Families were given the opportunity to have services awarded to their child if a delay was found when assessments were completed using ELAP/LAP3. The Parent Child Home Program offered an opportunity for families to spend time together with their child, while a home visitor modeled strategies for using books and toys to promote verbal interaction. Families received two home visits weekly and each visit lasted for 30 minutes. Books and toys were left in the home for parent and child usage.
- The 26 children/22 families who were served during FY 08 had at least one of the state identified recognizable risk factors.

#### **Measures Of Success:**

- Early LAP was used to assess language development of infants and toddlers at the two COEs in Florence County. The following are the results for each center:
  - **Receptive Language**

- Excellent Learning Preschool showed a 9.17 gain from beginning to mid-year. Their beginning percentage mastered was 67.50%. The end-of-year mastered was 76.11%.
  - Zion Canaan Child Development Center showed an overall gain of 8.50%. Their beginning percentage mastered was 61.67%. The end-of-year mastered was 79.33%.
- **Expressive Language**
  - Excellent Learning Preschool showed a 10.78% gain. Their beginning percentage mastered was 62.50%. The end-of-year mastered was 72.99%.
  - Zion Canaan Child Development Center showed an overall gain of 12.07%. Their beginning percentage mastered was 67.64%. The end-of-year mastered was 79.31%.
- The LAP-3 was used to assess the progress of 3 year-olds in the two COE's in Florence County. It assessed students' progress in eight domains (language development, literacy, mathematics, science, creative arts, social and emotional, approaches to learning, and physical health and development). Results for each COE are as follows:
  - **Excellent Learning Preschool**
    - Language Development – 21.01% gain
    - Literacy – 5.81% gain
    - Mathematics – 5.36% gain
    - Science – 10.83% gain
    - Creative Arts – 22.32% gain
    - Social and Emotional Development – 18.08% gain
    - Approaches to Learning – 0.0% gain
    - Physical Health and Development – 9.16% gain
  - **Zion Canaan Child Development Center**
    - Language Development – 3.77% gain
    - Literacy – 19.49% gain
    - Mathematics – 13.54% gain
    - Science – 14.38% gain
    - Creative Arts – 22.75% gain
    - Social and Emotional Development – 3.35% gain
    - Approaches to Learning – 0.0% gain
    - Physical Health and Development – 8.34% gain

### **S.C. Child Development Education Pilot Program (CDEPP)**

**Program Description:** CDEPP offers state-paid tuition of 4-year-old kindergarten classes to eligible students living in the 37 trial and plaintiff school districts involved in the school funding equity lawsuit, *Abbeville et al. vs. South Carolina*. First Steps oversees CDEPP 4K classes offered in non-public school environments. To qualify for state-paid tuition, a student's family must qualify for TANF or free/reduced-price lunch, be 4 years old by Sept. 1, 2007, and live in an eligible school district.

#### **Program results:**

- Eighty-three (83) students were served in Florence County CDEPP 4K classes.



- Seven (7) Florence County child care providers offered CDEPP 4K classes. Four of the centers had pre and post-ECERS scores. Three of the four Centers showed increases their ECERS scores. Increases were as follows:
  - Zion Canaan: 3.91 to 4.79 - .88 increase
  - Excellent Learning Preschool: 2.09 to 4.88 – 2.79 increase
  - Thelma Brown Headstart: 4.77 to 5.41 - .64 increase
- 420 hours of Technical Assistance were provided to CDEPP teachers and classrooms.

## **SCHOOL TRANSITION.**

### **Countdown To Kindergarten**

**Program Description:** Countdown To Kindergarten is a school transition strategy designed to successfully bridge at-risk students into the K-12 school environment. Preschool children with little or no formal preschool education and other risk factors are chosen to participate in the program. Certified kindergarten teachers make eight (8) one hour home visits to identified families/students during the summer prior to the student beginning kindergarten. Participants are identified by a community partnership (local schools, First Steps, DSS, Head Start, faith partner, etc.). Students are screened for participation, and parent participation is required. During the home visits, children and families are introduced to actual materials used in kindergarten classrooms, and are given a Kindergarten Transition Toolkit (books, puzzles, clay, blocks, floor mats, etc.) to keep. The final visit is a “field trip” to the school where the child will attend classes in the fall.

### **Program results:**

- Thirty families were initially served in the program. One family dropped from participation in the program. Twenty-nine families received all 8 home visits.
- **RESULTS:**
  - Participants receiving all 8 home visits was 96.55%
  - There was an 8% increase in the percentage of participants who read to or listened to their child read from a book.
  - Data analysis showed a 7% increase in the number of parents who talked about letters, words, or numbers with their children.
  - There was a 5% increase in the number of participants who drew, painted, or did other arts and crafts with their children.
  - The data indicates that there was a 35% increase in the number of parents who visited a library with their child.
  - The aforementioned changes in participant efforts increase children’s readiness for school by strengthening their literacy skills and are reflective of the findings of the National Institute for Literacy (A Child Becomes A Reader).

## **Financial Summary**

<b><u>Expenditures by Funding Source</u></b>			
State Appropriation.	\$474,124	Local Private	\$3,446
E.I.A. Appropriation	\$22,419	Federal	\$1,716
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation	\$307,816	In-Kind	\$66,991
C.O.E. Appropriation	\$138,798		
<b>TOTAL: \$1,015,310</b>			

<b><u>Expenditures by Program/Strategy Name</u></b>	
Administrative Functions	\$77,542
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$105,836
Parent Child Home FSD #1	\$23,249
Parent Child Home FSD #2	\$24,300
Parent Child Home FSD #3	\$32,771
Parent Child Home FSD #4	\$35,920
Parent Child Home FSD #5	\$42,476
Parent Child Home COE FSD #1	\$4,236
Parent Child Home COE FSD #4	\$6,589
4K – Angel’s Inn	\$32,034
4K – Excellent Learning Center	\$64,007
4K – Lake City Head Start	\$39, 115
4K – Melva’s Daycare	\$16,524
4K – Sunshine House #30	\$64,082
4K – Thelma Brown Head Start	\$45,909
4K – Zion Canaan Child Development Center	\$42,699
Countdown to Kindergarten	\$4,884
Facility Quality Enhancement Grant	\$64,887
Childcare Training and Professional Development	\$44,547
Scholarship Initiative (public)	\$87,000
Scholarship Initiative (in-house)	\$89,190
Home Based Services	\$67,513
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,015,310</b>

## NOTABLE DONORS

<i><b>DONOR'S NAME</b></i>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
Interest Income	\$15,845
Agapeland Community	\$100
Alberta Skipper	\$10
Alicestine Timmons	\$20
Angel's Inn Childcare	\$30
Antoinette Hennington	\$20
Artestia Harrison	\$20
BAC Daycare Center	\$70
Calandra Johnson	\$30
Deloris Epps Keels	\$20
Doris Baker	\$10
Eaddy's Daycare	\$10
Echols Daycare	\$30
Elizabeth Young	\$10
Erika Howard	\$10
Eva Samuel	\$20
Excellent Learning Preschool	\$185
Executive Park Daycare	\$80
Florence School District #3	\$11,640
Florence School District #2	\$1,600
Glory Anderson	\$20
God's Care Daycare	\$140
Gracie McLeod	\$50
Gwen Harris	\$10
Hazel Bryant	\$10
Immanuel Baptist Church	\$240
Jannie Dickson	\$20
Joan Wilds	\$20
Joanne Timmons	\$10
Joyce James	\$20
Kare Bear Daycare	\$40
Kiddie Castle	\$80
Kitty Little Lamb	\$50
LaShawn Scott	\$10
LaShic McCain	\$30
Latausha McNeil	\$50
Lendora Nowlin	\$10
Lillie Carraway	\$10
Linda Hoverman-O'Neal	\$100
Little Promises Learning Center	\$50
Lorena Blue	\$10
Mary Hanna	\$20
Mattie Eaddy	\$10
May Hanna	\$10
Melva's Daycare	\$20
Michelle McFadden	\$10
Mildred Brown	\$60
Missy Davis	\$10

Nesmith Daycare	\$70
Patricia Lytch	\$10
Pee Dee Electric	\$2,500
Percilla Wilson	\$50
Precious Moments Daycare	\$10
R. Hampton Andrews	\$20
Rhonda Williams	\$90
Ruby Knight	\$10
Ruby M. Brown	\$10
Shelly Benthall	\$50
Shirley Lockett	\$10
Spencer R. Scott	\$260
St. Anthony School	\$30
Stepping Out on Faith	\$40
Stepping Stones	\$130
Tamela Stack	\$20
Terwanda York	\$10
Thompson Daycare	\$40
Thursday's Child	\$130
Tina Chassereau	\$80
Tinker Bell Nursery	\$50
Toddler's Daycare	\$20
Tosha's Tiny Tots	\$20
Tracy McKnight	\$10
Trinity Baptist Church	\$40
Troy-Johnson Learning Center	\$30
US Toy Co., Inc.	\$20
Various Daycares	\$960
Wal-Mart	\$500
Williams Daycare	\$40
Yachtsman Resort Hotel	\$50
Zion Canaan Child Development Center	\$140
Zion Safe Haven	\$60
<b>TOTAL: \$36,460</b>	

***Local Match Percentage for FY 2008: 15.45%***

# COUNTY PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CATEGORY	NAME
<b>Pre-K thru Primary Teacher</b> Timmonsville	Patricia A Stewart <a href="mailto:pstewart@sc.rr.com">pstewart@sc.rr.com</a>
<b>Pre-K thru Primary Teacher</b> Pamplico Elementary School	Linda Rankin <a href="mailto:Lkr49@aol.com">Lkr49@aol.com</a>
<b>Family Educator Provider</b> Florence	Ivey Staley <a href="mailto:instaley@yahoo.com">instaley@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Family Educator Provider</b>	Shondra Johnson
<b>Child Care Provider</b> Executive Park Learning Center	Hattie Myers
<b>Child Care Provider</b> Zion Cannon Childcare Dev.	Linda Hearon
<b>Health Care Provider</b> McLeod	Tracy Stanton <a href="mailto:tstanton@mcleodhealth.org">tstanton@mcleodhealth.org</a>
<b>Transportation Provider</b> PDRTA	Janice Baroody <a href="mailto:janicebaroody@pdrta.org">janicebaroody@pdrta.org</a>
<b>Non-Profit Organization</b> United Way of Florence	Mary Wiser <a href="mailto:marywiser@bellsouth.net">marywiser@bellsouth.net</a>
<b>Business Community</b>	Atty. Charlie Blake <a href="mailto:cblake@finklealaw.com">cblake@finklealaw.com</a>
<b>Parents of Pre-School Children</b> Florence	Wendy Bird <a href="mailto:wendybir@bellsouth.net">wendybir@bellsouth.net</a>
<b>Parents of Pre-School Children</b> Florence	Tacey Fleming
<b>Parents of Pre-School Children</b> Florence	Jean Marie Graham <a href="mailto:jmgraham@flo2.k12.sc.us">jmgraham@flo2.k12.sc.us</a> <a href="mailto:tjeang63@yahoo.com">tjeang63@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Member of Early Childhood Ed.</b> Pee Dee Healthy Start, Inc.	Madie Robinson <a href="mailto:madie@pdhs.org">madie@pdhs.org</a>
<b>Member of Early Childhood Ed.</b> Johnsonville	Craton G. Dicks <a href="mailto:Stayg2@yahoo.com">Stayg2@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Member of Early Childhood Ed.</b> Florence	Ernestine Weisner <a href="mailto:Weisner7erni@yahoo.com">Weisner7erni@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Member of Early Childhood Ed.</b> Francis Marion University	Dr. Dorothy Harris
<b>Florence School District 1</b> Florence	Thurmond Bacote
<b>Florence School District 2</b> Pamplico	Merrinell Taylor <a href="mailto:Merry.dave.taylor@verizon.net">Merry.dave.taylor@verizon.net</a> <a href="mailto:mtaylor@flo2.k12.sc.us">mtaylor@flo2.k12.sc.us</a>
<b>Florence School District 3</b> Lake City	Vacant
<b>Florence School District 4</b> Timmonsville	Vacant
<b>Florence School District 5</b> Johnsonville	Esau Nesmith
<b>Florence County Library</b> Children's Librarian	Debbie Quesada, Treasurer <a href="mailto:debquesada@yahoo.com">debquesada@yahoo.com</a>

<b>DHEC</b>	Michelline Cooper <a href="mailto:cooperm@dhec.sc.gov">cooperm@dhec.sc.gov</a>
<b>Head Start</b> Lake City	Maebelle Alston
<b>Florence County DSS</b>	Nadine Livingston <a href="mailto:nlivingston@dss.state.sc.us">nlivingston@dss.state.sc.us</a>
<b>Senate Appointment</b>	David Eaddy
<b>Senate Appointment</b>	Kendra Fling
<b>House Appointment</b>	Monroe Friday
<b>House Appointment</b>	James E. Byrd, III

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## COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

In FY08, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans.

In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

## **Success Stories**

*The impact Florence County First Steps has had and continues to have in Florence School District Four, Zion Canaan Child Development Center, and the Greater Timmonsville Area has been and continues to be awesome. Florence County First Steps initiatives have enabled parents to seek meaningful employment for the first time, as well as pursuing their high school diploma/GED.*

*The First Steps Program does more than give vouchers for child development services. The Parent-Child Home Program is intricately woven into the partnership. Parents are learning that parenting encompasses more than providing food, clothing and shelter. Effective parenting is providing the basic needs along with a high quality of education, a nurturing environment, appropriate communication, and guidance.*

*The Florence County First Steps Program, through strategic planning and community involvement, is ensuring that at-risk children and their families are given the first steps they need to become life long learners and to move from one socio-economic status to another.*

**Mrs. Linda Hearon, Director  
Zion Canaan Child Development Center**

*The Parent Child Home Program in Florence County School District Four has grown significantly over the years with the support of Florence County First Steps. At-risk families are provided books and toys to help promote language interaction. Home visitors model strategies to promote language development in children.*

*Participants in the Parent Child Home Program are assessed with several instruments. Florence District 4 families have shown significant growth on all measures. The Keys to Interactive Parenting Scale (KIPS) showed a 49.1% increase in improvement. Similarly, the Adult Child Interactive Reading Inventory showed a 62.7% improvement in adults and 72.3% improvement in the performance of children. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used to assess receptive language in children. A comparison of pre- and post-assessment percentile ranks showed a 7 point increase in average percentile rank.*

*Literacy and language development are the foundations upon which children succeed in school. Our partnership with Florence County First Steps is to “get children ready for school.”*

**Gloria Bracey**

**Florence School District Four  
Parent Child Home Program Coordinator**

*This past year, Florence County First Steps facilitated the funding of two programs at my center --- Center of Excellence and the 4K Expansion Pilot Program. Besides having a positive effect on my teachers and their classrooms, the students who are given assistance by them have excelled, and are truly examples of how the programs work. The children are being equipped mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, and are ready to succeed in school!*

**Vanessa Harrell, Director  
Excellent Learning Preschool, Inc.**

**Parent Comments from PCHP Family Satisfaction Survey**

- *"Listening to Mrs. Epps read to my children and asking questions helped me to remember to not only read the book to her, but make her aware of what is going on in the pictures." --- Florence 3 Parent*
- *"I think that Mrs. Kathy Epps is one of the best, if not the best. She has been a teacher (Home Visitor) to all 3 of my kids and now has them where all they want to do is read and learn." --- Florence 3 Parent*
- *"I have learned new techniques to help my children learn their vocabulary, numbers, and ABC's. This program has also helped me in preparing them for school." --- Florence 1 Parent*
- *"I think that this program is very helpful in showing the colors and how to work and learn with the puzzles." --- Florence 1 Parent*
- *"We learn that reading plays a big part in a family." --- Florence 4 Parent*
- *"It helped me to be more patient with my child and to listen to what he says when I'm reading to him." --- Florence 4 Parent*
- *"It helped my child want to read and my children helped us to read more." --- Florence 5 Parent*
- *"It encouraged me to read to my children and talk with them." --- Florence 5 Parent*



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Florence County

Total Children Under Six: 11,096

## CHILD POVERTY (Children in Families Receiving TANF Benefits)

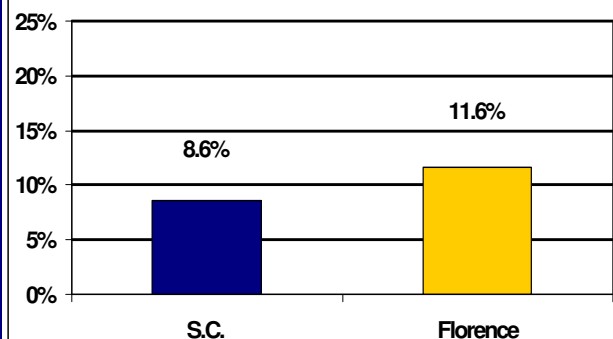
Statewide Average (2007): 8.4%      Florence County (2007): 11.6%

***Fast Fact:*** 1 in 9 Florence County children has an annual family income equivalent to \$10,325 (or less) for a family of four. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 45% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

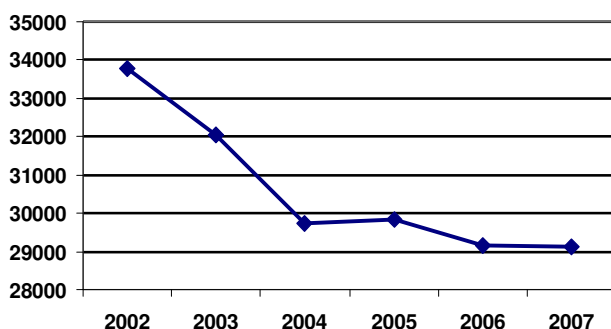
Children in deep poverty often face a wide variety of school readiness obstacles, ranging from inadequate prenatal care and nutrition to low maternal education.

1,290 of Florence County’s 11,096 children under age 6 received federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits during 2007, indicating a family income at or below 50% of the federal poverty definition.

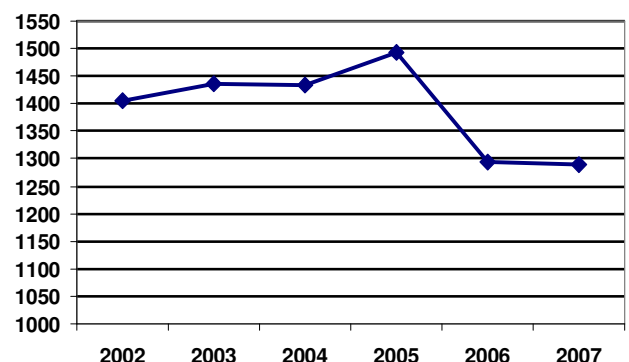
Children Under Age 6 Receiving TANF Benefits  
(August 2007)



South Carolina Children Under Age 6  
Receiving TANF Benefits  
2002-2007



Florence Children Under Age 6  
Receiving TANF Benefits  
2002-2007



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Florence County

Total Children Under Six: 11,096

## CHILDREN AT LOW BIRTH WEIGHT (Less Than 5.5 lbs.)

Statewide Average (2005): 10.2%

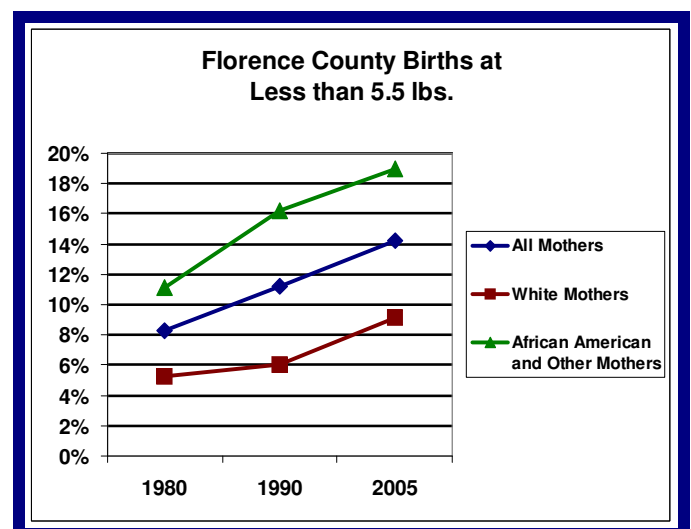
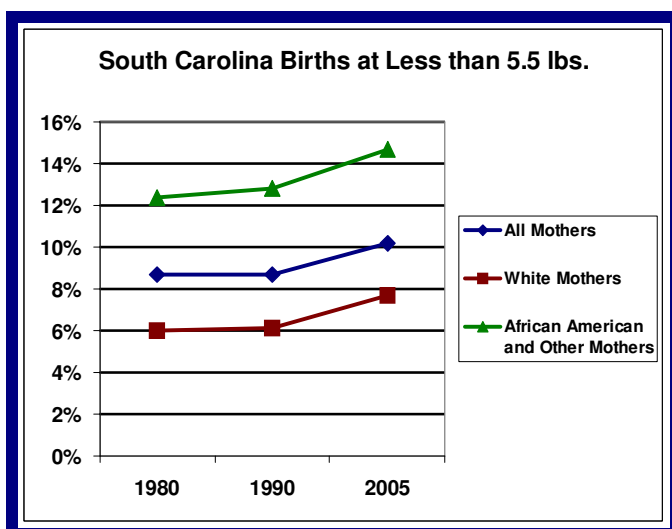
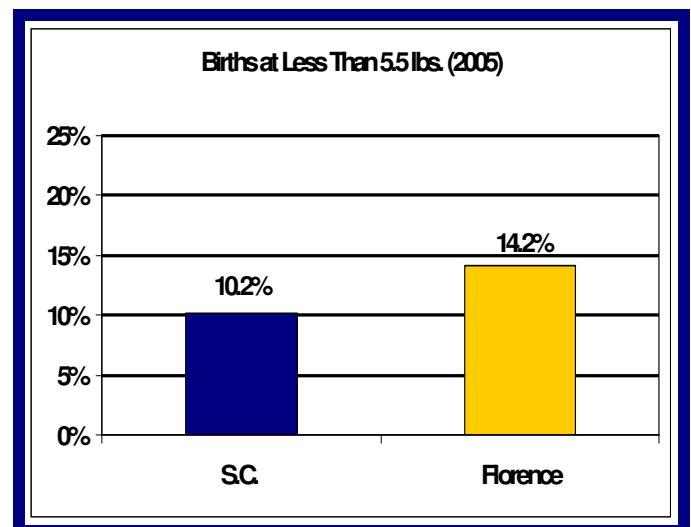
Florence County (2005): 14.2%

***Fast Fact:*** 1 in 7 Florence County children is born at a weight less than 5.5 lbs. A recent statewide analysis suggests that at least one-third of these children (36%-52% depending on weight category) will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

Babies born at low weights are often prone to developmental delays associated with early academic failure.

Many have received inadequate prenatal care and suffer from significant health complications.

277 of the 1,952 children born in Florence County during 2005 weighed less than 5.5 lbs.



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile Florence County

Total Children Under Six: 11,096

## BIRTHS TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Statewide Average (2005): 13.2%

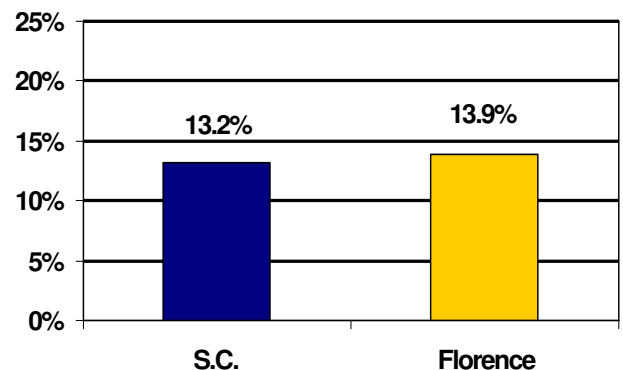
Florence County (2005): 13.9%

**Fast Fact:** 1 in 7 Florence County births is to a mother under 20 years of age. A recent statewide analysis suggests that 43% of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

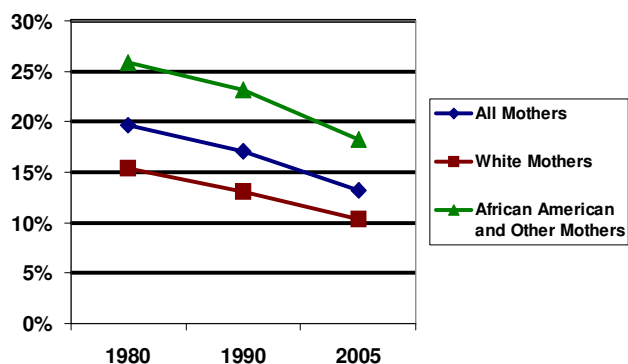
Teenage parents often lack the maturity and knowledge required to optimally fulfill important parental responsibilities, are less likely to advance their own educational attainment and often fail to advance beyond low-income status.

271 of the 1,952 children born in Florence County during 2005 had teenage mothers.

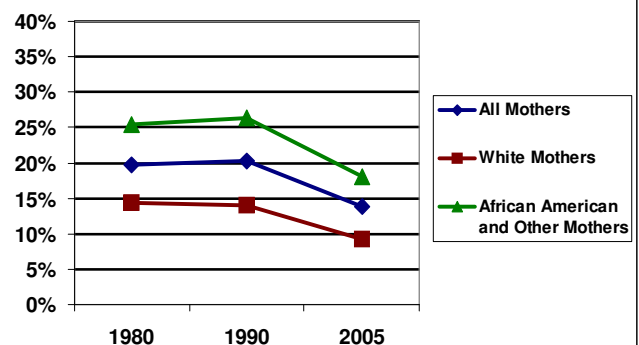
Births to Teenage Mothers (2005)



South Carolina Births to Teenage Mothers



Florence County Births to Teenage Mothers



# 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile

# Florence County

Total Children Under Six: 11,096

## BIRTHS TO MOTHERS WITH LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

Statewide Average (2005): 23.7%

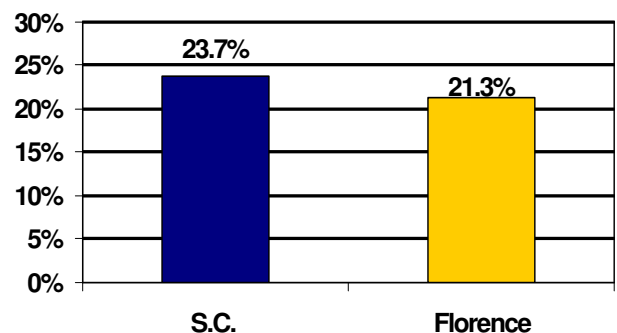
Florence County (2005): 21.3%

**Fast Fact:** Just over 1 in 5 children in Florence County is born to a mother possessing less than a high school diploma. A recent statewide analysis suggests that roughly half (48%) of these children will be retained or score at the “below basic” level (PACT) by third grade.

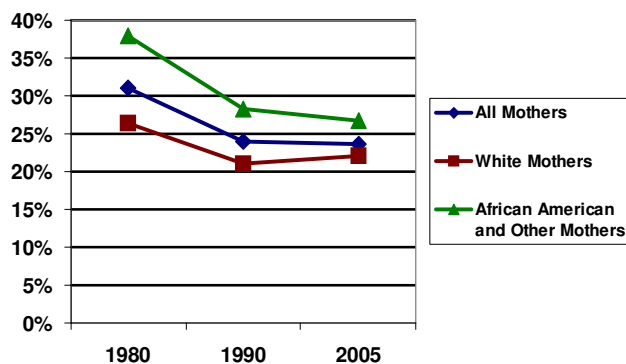
Research suggests that a mother’s own educational attainment is closely linked to the subsequent academic performance of her children.

416 of the 1,952 children born in Florence County during 2005 had mothers with less than a high school diploma.

Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma (2005)



SC Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma



Florence County Births to Mothers with Less than a High School Diploma

